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SUBJECT: DIYALA PERSPECTIVE: SUNNI COR MEMBER DISCUSSES  
DIYALA'S PROBLEMS, UPCOMING CONFERENCE

REF: 2006 BAGHDAD 3971

Classified By: Political Counselor Margaret Scobey for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. Council of Representatives (CoR) member Salim al-Jeboori (Sunni, IIP from Diyala) described a grim situation in Diyala province during a February 6 meeting with poloffs. The ethnically-diverse province adjacent to Baghdad is plagued by terrorists, Sunni insurgents, Shia militias, a lack of basic services and a non-functioning provincial government. In order to address both the root causes of Diyala's problems and advance solutions to improve the situation, CoR members from Diyala, are hosting a conference in Baghdad on February 8. End Summary.

12. (C) According to al-Jeboori, Sunnis comprise roughly 65% of Diyala's population although they occupy only 14 out of 41 provincial council seats. Furthermore, the Diyala chiefs of police, army and intelligence are Shia. The most senior Sunni officials, al-Jeboori said, are the Deputy Governor and the Assistant Governor for Administration. Diyala, a microcosm of Iraqi society with Sunni Arabs, Shia Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen and Christians living together, has long suffered from sectarian violence and terrorist activities. Al-Jeboori described the lack of basic services, the exodus of province professionals and noted that attendance at universities and schools is limited due to the security concerns. Diagnosing Diyala's security problems, al-Jeboori identified three main causes: Sunni extremists moving from Salah ad Din province to Diyala; Shia militias receiving support, training and materials from Iran; and sectarian and incompetent Iraqi Security Forces. The ISF commanders, specifically Iraqi Army (IA) chief, General Shakir, the former Iraqi Police (IP) commander, Ghassan, and new IP commander, General Ghanam al-Quraeshy exacerbate this last problem through their personal sectarian agendas, al-Jeboori concluded.

13. (C) In September 2006 Tawafuq representatives met with SCIRI officials and agreed to work together to decrease violence within the province (reftel), Al-Jeboori stated. However, he said, SCIRI has not cooperated fully and the security situation continues to deteriorate. Al-Jeboori commented that Tawafuq has recently reached out to Dawa which has agreed to form a committee to discuss political, social, economic, and security issues within the province. Most importantly, a conference on Diyala, organized and hosted by CoR members, has been scheduled for February 8. Diyala's Governor, Provincial Council (PC) Chair, security commanders, and both Sunni and Shia CoR members from Diyala were invited and several senior Diyala provincial officials are expected to attend. Among the issues to be discussed, al-Jeboori said, are the root causes of violence in Diyala and the role of ISF in the province.

14. (C) Al-Jeboori emphasized that Sunnis in Diyala do not view ISF as trustworthy partners and that this issue will

need to be addressed if tribal and political leaders are to work together. CF, he said, have played a role in creating Diyala's current situation by inflicting collective punishment on Diyala's Sunni residents. Al-Jeboori argued that these actions only serve the terrorists. The only way to fight al-Qaida, he continued, is to win over those who live in neighborhoods al-Qaida has invaded. The solution to Diyala's problems, al-Jeboori concluded, is quite clear: make the ISF more professional and less sectarian; use local knowledge to identify where the terrorists and criminals are; and rely on tribal leaders ) who want to help ) to fight terrorists who have infiltrated Diyala's communities.

15. (C) Comment: Diyala province, adjacent to Baghdad, has witnessed a marked increase in violence over the past few months as terrorists, Sunni insurgents and Shia militias compete for domination. The February 8 conference mentioned by al-Jeboori will not resolve the systemic problems within Diyala. However, the fact that the conference is a cross-sectarian, Iraqi initiative instigated by Diyala natives deeply concerned that their province has been hijacked by foreign agendas is a positive sign. Al-Jeboori implied that this conference would be followed by a gathering of both Sunni and Shia tribal leaders who have made overtures that they willing to work together to decrease violence. Ultimately, tribal leaders and GOI officials, both provincial and national, are the critical components for lasting stability and this conference is a positive step on the path to dialogue and eventually reconciliation. End Comment.

16. (C) Bio Note: Al-Jaboori is the deputy chair of CoR's legal committee and a lawyer by training. He enjoys good working relations with Sadrist legal committee chair Baha Al-Ariji. A long-time member of the IIP, al-Jeboori is the

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party's official spokesperson. He has been identified by IIP leadership as the principal interlocutor for critical legislation, most recently the IIP-drafted de-Baathification law, and the constitutional review process. Jabbouri was one of the few Sunnis on the Constitutional drafting committee. He was born in 1971 in Diyala province, and was a law professor at Diyala University until he became a CoR member. KHALILZAD